

WE STILL REMEMBER

AN EXPOSURE OF TORY MISRULE
BETWEEN THE TWO WARS

Price : TWOPENCE



WE STILL

*R*emember

A REVISED EDITION OF "SO ILL REMEMBERED"

● LABOUR IN POWER

The General Election of 1945 gave Labour for the first time, a substantial Parliamentary majority. Few will deny that the swing to the left was made more pronounced by distrust of the Tories, who in the course of the election campaign revealed themselves as the old gang, mouthing the old battle cries and raising the old familiar ghosts.

The Tories encouraged electors to believe that if they were returned to power, many wartime controls would be relaxed or abolished. The craziest of them talked as if Britain could return at once to a system of "free enterprise" unchecked by the discipline of a national economic policy. Mr. Churchill, the almost revered war leader, leapt into the fray with a reckless war whoop. He revived the worst features of Tory election scaremongering and did more than anyone else to destroy the belief that the Tory leopard had at last got rid of its spots. Would the Tories dare try to restore the world of 1939? Could they be trusted to carry out the terms of the Beveridge Report, the White Paper on a National Health Service, the New Education Act?

Mr. Churchill, during the war, had spoken of his love of the traditional Britain. To millions of electors that was a frightening prospect if it included the tradition of unemployment, poverty and social misery which they had suffered or witnessed in the inter-war years. Let there be no mistake, candidates who were run by the Labour and the Co-operative Parties knew, and made it clear in their pre-election literature, that Britain would face severe economic problems after the war. She would be heavily in debt to other countries. She would face an immense task in getting her economy switched over rapidly enough from war to peace uses. To pay for necessary food brought from other countries, a great increase in exports would be necessary. In its election manifesto, the Labour Party insisted that it made no baseless promises. "The future will not be easy," the manifesto said. But upon one thing the Labour, Trade Union and Co-operative Movements were resolved—the difficulties of the transitional period would have to be shared. If there were sacrifices they would not fall on one section of the community only; if austerity came, it would be shared by all. Equally, provision would be made to ensure that when prosperity came, its benefits would be evenly spread over the whole community.

● REACTION RAISES ITS HEAD

A plea is being made for the return of the "incentives"; of fear of starvation and unemployment on the one hand, and glittering

prizes and profits on the other. Thus the "Economist" for the 9th August, 1947, says:—

"Not until the lash of economic adversity ceases to be a metaphor in statesmen's speeches and becomes something that the individual feels on his own back will the 'moral' crisis be surmounted. If the Government wants real economy throughout the length and breadth of the land, it should so mould its economic policy that every individual starts counting his pennies again, and every business firm begins to get anxious about its profit and loss account. . . . The Government ought to be hurrying on the disinflationary process by every means in its power, instead of impeding it for fear of creating unemployment."

"A moderate degree of unemployment would, in fact, be a godsend, since there is nothing else that will get the labour for the mines, for the textile industries and for agriculture, and that will really clear the way for exports."

The "Economist" would probably sweep aside the all-party and all-nation pledge to maintain full employment. A little matter of a broken pledge to the nation won't worry the "Economist" it seems—so long as it is not taken as a precedent for breaking pledges to the important people. To give Sir John Anderson, who is an Opposition leader, credit, he does not conceal his opinions and there can be no doubt that he represents big business opinion outside and inside the Tory Party. Sir John wants "controlled deflation." He and everyone else knows that to begin manipulating internal credit, and money values would be a dangerous game. It would increase the proportion of the National income which goes in debt charges, since the money payments are fixed, and need not confer any advantage whatever upon our export trade. In any case, this sort of manipulation, if it is begun by one Nation, spreads until a competitive struggle results in financial, economic and social dislocation. That is just what happened after the first world war, and made the "Statist," one of the national organs of business opinion, say on the 19th May, 1923:—

"A little more than three years ago, in April, 1920, the curve of the business cycle changed abruptly from the upward sweep of the post-war boom, to the downward swing of depression. The fall of 50 per cent. in the price level that has intervened since then has brought disaster to our trade, created a huge army of unemployed, and left a heavy load of taxation to be borne in future years by doubling the real burden of the national debt. These are dire calamities whose measures need no exaggeration."

● MANUFACTURING POVERTY

Terms like "disinflation" and "deflation" may mean little to the person whose most intricate financial calculation is to fill in a

football pool coupon. Deflation is a financial operation through which the credit and money which keep goods in circulation and create buyers for them are reduced. In 1920 the banks embarked upon that policy. They demanded the repayment of credits previously advanced by them to industrialists and manufacturers. In order to repay the banks, stocks of goods had to be turned into cash as quickly as possible. When that policy became general, everyone was getting rid of his stocks of goods, and prices slumped so heavily that sellers could not get enough to cover their costs of production. As a result, manufacturers stopped making goods, closed down their factories and threw their employees out of work. They then demanded reductions in wages in order to reduce their costs of production.

From 1921-1923, it was calculated, wages fell by £500,000,000 per year, but at the other end of the scale, the capital value of fixed interest bearing securities increased by £712 millions.

Deflation, therefore was a measure by which wages were reduced, certain types of profit were increased, and unemployment was manufactured or aggravated.

THERE WAS NO WAGE FREEZE THEN !

The newspapers of the early 1920's remind us of the social and economic consequences of "deflation." Speaking in Glasgow on 19th January, 1922 (just about two years after deflation was started), Mr. Austin Chamberlain, Tory Chancellor of the Exchequer said:—

"We are confronted with economic and financial difficulties greater even than those which fell upon our country at the conclusion of the Napoleonic wars. Nearly 2,000,000 of our people are unemployed; the trade of the country is stagnant, the purchasing power of Europe does not exist; the whole machinery of exchange and trade has been destroyed."

(You might remember that quotation when the Tories claim that they could have handled the post-war difficulties better than anyone else.)

So large a proportion of the working population received either unemployment pay or public relief that "The Times" commented on the 23rd December, 1922:—

"More than half the Nation is receiving help in one form or another from public funds."

● EAST IS EAST . . .

At the end of 1920 the daily newspapers made depressing reading. The social and human results of deflation appeared in the news columns—not in the city pages. At the bottom end of the social scale, which included thousands of ex-service men, were those who bore the burden of austerity; at the top end were those who flaunted extravagance in the haunts of the rich.

"Between 250 and 350 of the unemployed of Camberwell will march to Camberwell workhouse in Gordon Road and claim admission as inmates—the authorities are making beds ready for the influx." — ("Daily Chronicle" (now the "News Chronicle") 10th November, 1920.)

"The Ritz menu card for instance will be adorned with birds and real feathers, and will contain ten heavy courses of exhausting dimensions. The West End on Christmas night will be a swirl of the most riotous splendour."

That contrast continued to exist year after year and no Housewives' League rose to protest against it. In Christmas, 1922, there was still austerity—for some:—

An advert in the Glasgow Press appealed: "The Christian Volunteer Force—a hungry Christmas . . . the blackest we have ever known . . . cruel hunger . . . bitter cold and squalid misery."

"The exodus to the Riviera which started a few weeks ago, is now in full swing and I believe not a berth can be booked on the Train de Luxe . . ."
—(21st December, 1922.)

● SORRY—NO HOPE

Whilst there was some uneasiness about these inequalities there was no Tory plan to abolish them. Indeed, as late as on 16th July, 1929, Mr. Churchill is found saying:—

" . . . on questions of economic law it does not matter at all what the electors think or vote or say. The economic law proceeds. You may vote by overwhelming majorities that you can cure unemployment by public works on public money, but that will not have the slightest effect on the results whatever they may be, which you achieve by your programme."

Mr. Churchill bowed before "economic laws" as he had not done when he restored the gold standard in 1925 and knocked the bottom out of our coal export trade.

Some, like Viscount Lymington, opposed Unemployment Insurance as being bad for the independent spirit of the British people:—

“ . . . But evil is not only done by adding £12,250,000 to the State commitments of this country. That is the least of it. The worst is the attack on the independence and the moral fibre of the people of this country. This is eating into the stubborn independence of our English character.”—(“Hansard,” 21st November, 1929.)

We can never understand why the Lymingtons never themselves experimented with the development of moral fibre through semi-starvation. Such experiments were left to the poor.

In the same paper that recorded beanfeasts of the well-to-do, Mr. Lloyd George offered a deputation of the unemployed cold comfort as he gave reasons why he could do little to help them:—

“ The difficulties are difficulties of limitation and restriction . . . that is the restriction of cash which we are all suffering from, whether local authorities, governments or individuals.”—(“Glasgow Herald,” 23rd December, 1920.)

DROWNING IN PLENTY

Starvation in the midst of plenty became only too common in the 1920's, partly because the Government accepted the view that, if left to itself, private enterprise would solve its own problems. Because the Government refused to plan, the farmers planned in their own way to get the best price they could for their products. To-day, because the market is planned and the price guaranteed, it is difficult to imagine such a circular as the following being sent out (Circular 172 of the National Farmers' Union):—

“ Important—Milk Position.

“ Under present conditions, the central milk committee of the Union strongly advise the policy of keeping all surplus milk off the market, and, in all cases where no contract has been signed, to refuse to sign such a contract. The County Milk Committee have already advised producers to keep back one-third of their supplies and to utilise it on the farm, and the continuance of this policy is also strongly urged.”—C. A. Wright, County Secretary, Farmers' Union, 6th April, 1922.

This method of equating supply and demand was so much admired that the “Fruitgrower,” 21st September, 1922, reported a meeting of South Lincolnshire potato growers where the speaker explained

that there was a surplus of potatoes in the country, and suggested that growers might copy the example of the milkmen last March "when it was decided to withhold a portion of the supply from the market. He saw no reason why farmers should not agree to feed these to pigs or to allow one-third of the potatoes to rot."

In the year in which milk and potatoes were destroyed, "Glasgow Evening News," 24th November, 1922, reported:—

"The sudden death of a fourteen months' old child in the Northern District of Glasgow provides a poignant example of the dire straits to which unemployment has reduced many working-class families in the city . . . a distressing state of affairs was found in the house . . . there was no food . . . and without exaggeration it may be said that the entire family was starving. The total income of the household was 15s. per week."

● AUSTERITY FOR SOME

In those days if the unemployed did not already know what austerity meant they soon found out. Their rates of pay were (1922):—

Man	15s.
Wife	5s.
Child	1s.

Even so, influential voices were raised against the "dole" as it was called. We found the Tory "Morning Post" saying, 20th October, 1922:—

"THE DOLE SYSTEM CANNOT BE ABOLISHED AT ONCE, BUT IT MAY BE REFORMED SO THAT IT SHALL NO LONGER BE SAID THAT IT IS LESS PROFITABLE TO WORK THAN TO DO NOTHING."

A man, wife and four children could then receive the magnificent sum of 24s. per week in this non-austere world of the 1920's. It remained for Mr. Churchill and Mr. Lloyd George to carry the comment farther in the 1930's, when the minority Labour Government raised the allowances a few shilling per week. Mr. Churchill accused the Government of "making this country a vast soup kitchen for the unemployed," and Mr. Lloyd George thought it had "crossed the border line of prudence between providing against starvation and the temptation of men not to seek work."

Not only was the world an austere place for some, but it was considered proper that it should be so. It was the fear of austerity and starvation that kept the worker in his place, and prevented him getting ideas beyond his station in life.

Occasionally the unemployed lost heart and became angry, bitter and rebellious:—

“ Following a meeting of a Committee sitting to find work and raise funds for the unemployed in Norwich, a great crowd attacked the windows of a grocery store in the centre of the city and scattered the goods.”

It was far easier to attribute an occasional outburst of anger to the “ paid agitator ” as everyone who tried to organise the unemployed was called in those days, than to think out a policy to relieve the austerity of the unemployed. So the out-of-works took to demonstrations and hunger marches which made every socially-minded citizen self-conscious and ashamed as he saw them proceeding from workhouse to workhouse on the road to Westminster. As Mr. Tom Johnston, M.P., put it:—

“ Some of the hunger marches in London presented a pitiable and heartrending spectacle. Emaciated, starved, ragged, beaten hopeless, not from these will come a social revolution. The Press placards were yelling ‘ Moscow ’ and ‘ Communist Plot ’ but God knows the poor victims in that procession were concerned for a square meal—and for a Soviet, not at all.”—(“ Forward,” 2nd December, 1922.)

● LIVING WITH AUSTERITY

Nor was this austerity a temporary feature of our social life. Between the two world wars, the average rate of unemployment was over 14 per cent. of the population. In the late 1930's the B.B.C. ran a series of talks called “ Time to Spare.” Several unemployed men and their wives broadcast, and the talks were afterwards published in book form. People who complain that the existing rations are less than they can properly live on, should try to manage on the fare described in some of these talks.

“ I feel if I get half a pound of tea every week for three weeks, then I can make do the fourth week with a quarter of a pound. In ways like that I save a penny or two. I manage to get a two-pound jar of jam once a month, and make it last the four weeks. Some weeks I can get a quarter of a pound of bacon for threepence to threepence-halfpenny. Now that eggs are cheap, I use quite a lot. We very, very rarely get cheese. We all like it but it is a bit of a luxury. When there are birthdays we have it. I can't manage more than one box of matches a week—that's all we ever use. Many a time we've sat in the dark—it is gas-light, and we haven't a penny for the slot maybe, or we haven't a match. Rather than let people know, we sat in the dark.”—(Page 34.)

Rationing gives us a guaranteed minimum of food, but there was no guarantee for the unemployed.

"My husband never changes his dole money, but although he doesn't keep a halfpenny pocket-money, still we can't manage. And we don't waste nothing. And there's no enjoyment comes out of our money—no pictures, no papers, no sports. Everything's patched and mended in our house.

We're both of us always occupied in the home. I haven't had a holiday for thirteen years. My husband's never been to a football match. When people talk about the talkies I don't know what they mean. I've never been, but I've no desire to go. It's all gone."—(Page 30.)

Austerity here does not mean trimming off the luxuries—it means near-starvation.

"It's the women who suffer. The man brings the dole in and he's finished—the woman's got all the rest. Many a week he's given it to me and I've just said: 'Put it in the fire.' It's just like an insult to a mother to bring in 33s. to keep her home and five children.

I've often said to my husband: 'Don't you feel ashamed at bringing this amount to keep all these on?' And he'd say: 'What can I do?' He'd work if he could get it. I'm not blaming my husband. I don't know who to blame, but I wonder who I should blame. If only men in authority would realise what a struggle it is for us women, maybe they'd do something."——(Page 31.)

There is stark misery in those bitter sentences.

"It's terrible to think that our children haven't got a chance. Setting aside the lack of food or warmth, they run short in other things, too. We can't keep things from them, and some of them worry like little old men. Some get to feel different from other children, because they can't have what others are having. A little boy wants what other boys are having; he comes to you and says: 'Can't I have so-and-so, like all the other boys have got? And he can't understand why you say 'No.' But there just isn't the money for it. Or a little girl has to speak on Open Day at school, and she hasn't a white dress like her little mates. Children from better-to-do families don't mean to be unkind to others, but they sometimes rub it in. So, though we plan and manage as best we may, we can't give them ordinary childhood. We cannot even give them a sure hope of getting work when they leave school—but we try never to discourage them. My bigger boy comes to me sometimes and says: "You just wait till I start work, Daddy," or something like that, to cheer me up."—(Page 80.)

Austerity there is hardship and self-denial without any solid prospect of relief.

"We don't have a Sunday dinner—we have potatoes. We do get meat on Fridays, once a week, when the money comes in. We get fourpennyworth of stewing beef. It's mainly bread and 'marge' we live on—and jam sometimes for the children at tea. I boil rice sometimes for a change from potatoes. I spend about six shillings and twopence a week on bread and two shillings and sevenpence on margarine. Then we have fourpennyworth of cheese or tripe, and sixpennyworth of vegetables. Sugar comes to about one shilling and eightpence. We don't buy eggs, however cheap they are, because they aren't filling. Sometimes I get threepence worth of cut oranges at the market for Sunday tea, because I know fruit is good for children. They're called 'cut oranges' because they've had the bad parts cut off.

"There's many a time I puts my children to bed a bit early in case they'll ask for a bit of bread and I'm afraid it won't last for breakfast. You daren't reckon up from one day to another what you've got."—(Page 34.)

All the little extras we enjoy even in these days play no part in the dietary of poverty.

● ECONOMICS OF POVERTY

For some, the years between the two world wars were far from austere, but for others, austerity was a grim companion who haunted their tortured lives. Between 1927 and 1939 we had an average of over 1,500,000 persons wholly unemployed. After four years of re-armament from 1935-1939, there were still 1,308,202 persons wholly unemployed at the outbreak of the war. Even this concealed the severity of unemployment in some areas, for it was unevenly spread.

According to the Ministry of Labour Gazette the percentage of unemployment in the North-East District on 23rd October, 1922, was 42.5 in shipbuilding and 26.7 in engineering. Of every 200 persons, normally shipbuilding workers, you would have found 85 unemployed! At that time the average rate for the country was 12 per cent.

Even that average did not disclose the whole truth, because the official returns did not cover all workers (railwaymen and agricultural workers were not then included) and some who dropped out of benefit no longer registered as unemployed.

Conservatives speak as if austerity were something quite new—to many of them it is, but to millions of the people of Britain it is

not. In order to obtain necessary supplies of coal during the war, boys of military age were directed into the coal mines. So bad a name had the industry won for itself that most boys preferred the Army, Navy or Air Force to the mines. In the 1930s, J. B. Priestley wrote in his "English Journey":—

"I met some of their (miner's) wives sitting round a fire in a sewing circle . . . their frank talk about their men's wages was not pleasant to listen to. They were glad to see me and were neither resentful nor whining, but nevertheless they made me feel like a fat rich man. The younger women amongst the miners' wives were emphatic on one subject—their sons were not going into the pits. No more coal mining in the family for them."—(J. B. Priestley's "English Journey," page 333.)

● FORGOTTEN PEOPLE

In the early days of the war, miners regarded it as an escape from economic slavery to get into the Armed Forces. The young and vigorous miners, who are the mainstay of the industry to-day, were lads at school in the 1930s, when their families were denied employment in the mines and driven on to the Means Test. During all the years when, because of general industrial depression, there was a surplus of coal, the mining population of Britain lived below the poverty line. As far back as 3rd March, 1922, Mr. Wm. Adamson, M.P., demanded an inquiry into the conditions of the industry and stated that colliers' wages were being subsidised by Parish Relief (now called Public Assistance). In those days the Tories showed little sympathy for the miners, many of whom left the districts to take up any kind of job they could get elsewhere. Well might J. B. Priestley write:—

"It was all very puzzling. Was Jarrow still in England or not? Had we exiled Lancashire and the North-East Coast? Were we no longer on speaking terms with cotton weavers and miners and platers and riveters? Why had nothing been done about these decaying towns and these workless people . . . if Germans had been threatening these towns instead of want, disease, hopelessness, misery, something would have been done quickly enough. . . ." (J. B. Priestley's "English Journey," published in 1930.)

For the unemployed, austerity did not mean one supper party per week less, ten servants fewer, or the rationing of British currency to spend on the Riviera—it did not mean sending a son to a public

school a little less costly than Eton or Harrow or buying a dress or two less each year.

Austerity meant going short at every meal and getting too few meals every day. It meant having to live in one suit or one dress and hoping charitably-disposed friends would come to your rescue when these wore out. It meant that the smell or taste of really good food became too much for your weakened senses—it meant suffering—not inconvenience.

Men, millions of them, stood in long queues outside Labour Exchanges between the two wars; they stood, hungry men in hungry queues. What they received for themselves and their families just about prevented them starving, but often did not prevent their going hungry.

● THE INCENTIVE OF REWARD:!

Those who were employed received low wages and were far from prosperous. Here are samples of the kind of wages paid to male workers in 1931:—

	Per week.	
	s.	d.
Building	56	3
Pottery	56	2
Iron and steel	54	10
Boots and shoes	52	10
Road Transport (Goods)	52	1
Shipbuilding	51	9
Engineering	51	8
Furnishing	51	6
Woollens	49	4
Laundries	46	6
Coal mining (5 shifts)	45	11
Cotton	45	3
Agriculture	36	9

These wages were for a full week's work. If a man worked four days out of the six, he was not entitled to unemployment pay and did not appear in the official statistics of short time workers.

● INCOME AND NUTRITION

No less than 45 per cent. of the people of Britain lived in the distressed areas. Little wonder then that malnutrition was widespread. Sir John Boyd Orr, who made an investigation into the

question of nutrition and income, divided the population of Britain according to income and expenditure on food thus:—

Group	Weekly income per head	Average weekly expenditure on food per head	Estimated population of the group	
			Numbers in thousands	Percentage of total
1	Up to 10s.	4s.	4,500	10
2	10s. to 15s.	6s.	9,000	20
3	15s. to 20s.	8s.	9,000	20
4	20s. to 30s.	10s.	9,000	20
5	30s. to 45s.	12s.	9,000	20
6	Over 45s.	14s.	4,500	10

Sir John Boyd Orr estimated that in 1934 nearly half the population was suffering from malnutrition.

Malnutrition was in the main, the result of enforced austerity due to poverty. Most of the well-to-do escaped it; the less well-to-do did not, whatever their knowledge of dietetics.

● WAR-TIME IMPROVEMENT

During and since the war, food rationing, food subsidies, and better wages, milk in school, cod liver oil and orange juice at our clinics, have materially improved our nutritional standards. There may have been less for some of the overfed, because there has been more for the underfed. Consumption of milk in Jarrow, Gateshead, Wallsend, Seaham, and the black spots of South Wales, trebled during the war. In Harrogate, Salisbury, and Wells, the consumption slightly decreased.

By comparison with the non-austerity year 1933, mortality rates have greatly improved as the following figures show:—

	1933	1946	1949 (3rd quarter)
Infant Mortality* (per 1,000 live births) ...	63	43	26
Still-births (per 1,000 total births)	41.4	27	21.9
			(1948)
Maternal Mortality (per 1,000 total births)	5.75	1.43	1.17

Thanks to the provision of better medical services, school meals, and milk, and Family Allowances, the physique of school children

has improved since the war. Speaking in the House of Commons on 22nd July, 1947, the Secretary of State for Scotland said:—

“ . . . as a result of the tests that have been made in the great city of Glasgow, I find that the provision of mid-day meals and free milk and the development of the services—88 per cent. of our children in Scotland are taking advantage of the free milk provided—has resulted in an improvement in our children’s health, despite the difficulties with which we are faced. I think they are .88 inches higher and 3lbs. heavier than they were in the pre-war years.”

● HOUSING AND POVERTY

All the scarring, bitter experiences of the 1930s are conveniently forgotten by those who were at that time deaf to entreaty and appeal. Whilst houses were still needed and people continued to rot in the slums, 300,000 building operatives were unemployed and as each house was completed those who were at work expected to join the austere ranks of the unemployed.

And when you did build houses at reasonable rents, they had to be met out of inadequate wages:—

“ There are some pretty bad slums in Stockton, not far from the river. The Town Council built some new dwellings and a certain number of people moved into them from the slums. It looked as if these fortunate folk would soon have very different health records from those of the families left behind in the tumble-down old hovels. They had—but instead of being better, they were worse. The Local Medical Officer of Health soon discovered that the little extra rent demanded for the new houses was sufficient to reduce the tenants to a dangerous state of malnutrition.”—(J. B. Priestley’s English Journey, page 347.)

When Tories nag at Aneurin Bevan’s housing efforts they might recall how they succeeded, by bringing pressure to bear on Lloyd George, in destroying the Addison Housing Scheme after the last war.

“ Fortunately the Prime Minister (Mr. Lloyd George) stepped in and succeeded in limiting the number of houses to 176,000.”—(Lord Inchcape addressing the Annual Meeting of the P. & O. Steam Navigation Co., December, 1921.)

Addison was replaced by Sir Alfred Mond as Minister of Health, a somewhat novel choice, since he is afterwards quoted in the "Daily News" (later incorporated in the "News Chronicle") as saying:—

"Surely the newly married should be so happy that they can enjoy living in one room. . . . Isn't the demand of the newly married for a separate house a comparatively modern development? In China and the East generally, I understand they continue to live under the parental roof quite contentedly. No housing scheme could meet the needs of people who insist on having large families."

To-day it is considered an act of good citizenship to found a large family, and over a million new homes have been built since the end of the war.

● PRIVATE ENTERPRISE PLANNING

Poverty in the midst of plenty was the curse of the inter-war years. Unemployment, marketing schemes, protective tariffs were among the devices adopted to keep goods off the market. The Bank of England financed Companies to buy up and close down shipyards and cotton mills. That was the kind of planning which private enterprise did, and which would happen again if the Labour Government accepted the advice of Mr. Churchill offered in Parliament on 6th December, 1945:—

"Why can they not realise that the impulse and volume of national production, ingenuity and progress is overwhelmingly greater and far more fertile than anything that can be produced by Government officials or Party planners. If the Right Hon. Gentleman would only realise the limitations of beneficial Government functions, if he would not harden his heart, like Pharaoh, and would set the people free, half his problems would at least end themselves."

Yes, free as the people of Durham and South Wales in the glorious 1930s.

This is what the Tory leader, Mr. Harold Macmillan said of the Tory record when he spoke in the House of Commons on 14th November, 1938:—

" . . . Those Ministers chiefly concerned with home affairs have during the last four or five years displayed a complacency which I might describe as amounting sometimes to a certain smugness. From 1931 to 1937 they trusted to the stimulating effects of tariffs, of currency depreciation, of the normal rise of the trade cycle, and did not think it worth while to bother about doing very much. It has been what I might call "the slag-heap

period" of our policy. A few minor Bills, little tinkering Measures, to deal with the problem of the Special Areas and the unemployed were considered to be sufficient, and the chief anxiety of those Ministers has been directed towards not carrying out the recommendations of their own Commissions.

My Right Hon. Friend, the Minister of Labour, has shown a remarkable degree of dexterity with the figures of unemployment. Unemployment is explained away by breaking up the figures—I think that is the phrase. In other walks of life if we conjure too much with figures we can get into great difficulty. The Minister has tried, like Mrs. Partington, to sweep away unemployment, but with a graph instead of a mop."

● AGE OF THE "COMMON MAN"

We have quoted many facts which are ill-remembered, and which some of those who are lecturing the workers from the icy hilltops might wish to forget. The world of the inter-war years was the best they could make. It was the measure of the fitness to govern of the champions of so-called free enterprise. It offered in abundance unemployment, low wages, restricted production and poverty. At one end of the social scale were the prosperous few who flourished almost under any condition of industry, and at the other an average of over 1,500,000 persons and their dependants who just hung on to existence by a thread. Anything better than the severest austerity and semi-starvation was considered to be a social danger to be remedied by harsh measures like the Means Test of hated fame.

Every intelligent citizen knows that Britain is up against it—and that we have to "work or want." They welcome the choice between the two, for in the past, many of them who had work also wanted, while others had no work and much want.

MANY TORIES ARE AGITATING FOR HIGHER RATES OF INTEREST UPON INVESTED CAPITAL; LOWER RATES OF INCOME TAX AND SURTAX; LONGER HOURS AND LOWER WAGES FOR THOSE IN EMPLOYMENT; REDUCED FOOD SUBSIDIES, OR NONE AT ALL, FOR THE HOUSEWIFE.

In short, the whole burden of austerity is to be thrown back upon those who bore it before the war, and whose condition has somewhat improved since. Of course, they are used to it! Put bluntly, those who take this view demand that profits shall go up and wages go down; that the rich, and even the moneyed idler, shall get a bigger share of production and the worker a smaller!

Every fair-minded person will reject with contempt, any plan (or no plan at all) which seeks to restore the gross inequalities we were so ashamed of during the war. We pledged ourselves to build a better Britain, and if it has to come the hard way, the austere way, we will face it, but we will face it together.

We will not starve workers to feed drones.

Production must be increased if our standards of living are to be maintained, much less improved. It is the duty of every well-wisher of the people of Britain, of everyone who puts the claims of men and women before the traditional usurpations of property, to respond to the Government's call to work. Britain's workers are increasing production beyond anything done by other countries.

In the war years, Mr. Churchill promised the nation, blood, sweat, toil and tears. The nation warmed to him and steeled itself to meet terrors known and unknown. Our pledges of a better Britain were made to those by whose blood and tears our sweat and toil bore rich increase in victory. Our battle is not yet won. Our toil and sweat, our faith and our courage are needed in the task of building a better Britain. Behind the plans of the Labour Government there must be the dauntless spirit and the strong right arm of good citizenship. We must not flinch or fail, for the hour of the common man has come. We must move swiftly, not merely because the hungry wolves of circumstance howl behind us, but because opportunity beckons us on to a juster Britain.

And in spite of Tory moanings Britain has led the world in her recovery. Under Labour rule Britain will continue to do so.

Speaking in the House of Commons on 27th September, Mr. Spearman, Tory M.P. for Scarborough, said:

"This expenditure on Social Services has gone up from £326,000,000 before the war to £1,165,000,000. Of course I am not denying the desirability of that expenditure, but I am questioning its practicability at the present time. I believe that that expenditure has a devastating effect on the economy of this country."

The Tory leopard has not changed its spots. Tories still believe in the old incentives of fear and the whip of insecurity. They must not return—neither the Tories nor the incentives.



Further copies of this booklet may
be obtained through:

The Co-operative Party
Headquarters

56 Victoria Street

London, S.W.1

Price : 2d. each. 3d. post paid

1s. 6d. per dozen " "

10s. 6d. per 100 carriage paid

5 guineas per 1,000 " "

Acknowledgements to "Reynolds
News" for permission to re-
produce the photograph used on
the front cover and to "Picture
Post" who kindly loaned the
photograph reproduced on the
inside of cover.